

309 Yoakum Pkwy #601
Alexandria, VA 22304
February 26, 1986

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm taking a break from my programming in the "C" language to write you a short note. I'm still at work, but will be heading home soon. Last Saturday we bought a new car; another Toyota Corolla. About two weeks ago our old car stopped running for good. While backing out of our underground parking place, I heard a thunk and found that the tie bar which connects the steering to the wheel had broken through. The Toyota place said a replacement could only be found in the junkyard and I was concerned about the safety of the car, so I had it towed away to the scrap yard after a futile attempt to sell it. Now I really hate to buy cars. This time I called AAA, which we just joined, and they sent me a certificate which guaranteed I could get the car of my choice for the manufacturer's recommended retail price. Now around here the dealers all mark up the price about \$1500 to account for "local market conditions" so the AAA certificate saved me a lot of bargaining. Finally, we came with our new car which is easier to drive than the old one because of automatic transmission, power brakes, etc.

While we were car shopping last Saturday the snow started unexpectedly in the afternoon and about 3" fell. It pretty much melted on Sunday but then it snowed another 4" on Monday night. Now it is Wednesday and the forecast is for snow tonight. Fortunately it is not too cold.

We have a number of activities lined up: a Handel Festival performance at the Kennedy Center on Sunday, a Gilbert & Sullivan production the following Friday, and more music and a Shakespeare play before the end of March. I am, of course, busy with school work but the projects are not as long as last term.

I recently completed work on a proposal with another company. If we win the contract I will immediately go to Hawaii for about three months to perform "knowledge engineering". This is a term which means translating human understanding into an artificial intelligence system. I have no interest in travelling to Hawaii, but the work will involve modern computers and should be as enjoyable as any job can be. Vickie can get a leave of absence and will come over when she can. Before we depart, we hope to go to Japan for a week.

I hope you are getting along well. If the trip comes through I will certainly stop to see you.

Love,
Jim